

Changes to Youth and Family Meetings

In the next couple months, changes will be made to Family Team Decision Making (FTDM) and Shared Planning Meetings (SPM). The first is the name. These meetings are now **Youth and Family Meetings**.

With a new name comes a new meeting model. The rolling implementation will begin Feb. 15, 2026, with the goal of statewide changes by April 1, 2026. These practice changes align with the systems improvement program revisions in the D.S. Settlement Agreement and the statewide goals for the Thriving Families Initiative.

What is Changing

- **Structured Process for All Meetings:** Rather than maintaining separate meeting types, FTDMs and SPMs will be Youth and Family Meetings.
- **Consistent Framework:** DCYF contracted with Evident Change for all meetings to align with the six structured stages of Team Decision Making (TDM), ensuring shared understanding, transparency, and continuity for everyone involved.
- **Virtual and In-Person Meetings:** The meeting format will be based on the family or youth's needs. In-person meetings will be the standard/default. Staff will determine if the meeting should be in-person, virtual, or hybrid based on the accessibility/engagement, safety, and/or logistical needs of the family, youth, and kin.
- **Referrals/Requests:** Each region will adopt the statewide referral process currently in development to request meetings.
- **Invitations:** Meetings Consultants will be responsible for inviting all requested participants and collaborating with caseworkers and supervisors to ensure all youth 12 years and older and their two chosen supports are invited.
- **Safety Check Ins and Debrief:** Meetings Consultants will complete a safety check with all youth and parents prior to the meeting to ensure the meeting is a safe and supportive space for all meeting participants. Consultants, caseworkers, supervisors, and other DCYF staff will engage in a de-brief after all to discuss next steps and action items.
- **Transparent Documentation:** Meetings Consultants will chart discussions that result in a clear written action plan, either in electronic or paper form. Families will leave meetings with this plan including outlined decisions, agreed upon next steps, and timelines to support follow-through and accountability.
- **Required Trainings:** Caseworkers, supervisors, and area administrators will receive virtual training during Foundations of Practice in December, January, and February, these trainings are recorded and can be accessed on an as-needed basis moving forward.



There will be two opportunities for in-person, interactive trainings offered statewide October 2025 through December 2026: Engaging Youth in Meetings and Partnering with Youth and Families in Meetings. Meetings Program Consultants (MPC's/facilitators) and their supervisors will receive a four-day, in-person training of the new model in early 2026 to prepare for implementation.